

FACT SHEET ON CHARLES P. CECIL (DDR 835) SURFACING OF RUSSIAN SUBMARINE

On October 29, 1962 about one hour after sunset the destroyer U.S.S. CHARLES P. CECIL (DDR 835) was proceeding to her station on the Cuban quarantine line. The officer of the deck LTJG John G. HUNTER noticed a small blip appear on his bridge radar scope. In the ship's Combat Information Center, Radarman Third Class Russell L. NAPIER saw the same blip on his scope and notified the watch supervisor Radarman First Class Walter K. MARTIN. The contact showed no lights, and CIC and the bridge agreed it looked like a submarine either snorkeling or on the surface.

The Commanding Officer, Commander Charles P. ROZIER was notified and he came to the bridge. CECIL closed the contact. Shortly it disappeared from the radar scopes. CECIL'S ASW team went to their stations - LTJG Ronald E. JOHNSON, the ASW Officer and LTJG Charles J. GALLAGHER, the assistant ASW Officer, went to Sonar and organized their team of Elroy M. NELSON, Sonarman Third Class; Joel A. SMITH, Sonarman Third Class; Allen C. TUELL, Sonarman Third Class; Michael A. CARITO, Sonarman Seaman; and Richard C. TURREY, Sonarman Third Class aboard from the U.S.S. BARNEY (DLG 6).

In CIC similar preparations were made under the direction of LT William B. PEIRCE, Operations Officer.

Soon the CECIL gained sonar contact which was evaluated probable submarine. Two Navy P2V Neptune patrol planes were overheard on the radio circuit. They were called in to assist. Captain ROZIER took the Conn and LTJG HUNTER took control of the aircraft from VP5.

CECIL now held what it believed to be a positive submarine. The submarine tried various evasive tactics and at one time contact was lost when the sonar stopped transmitting. Sonarman SMITH repaired it by using a screwdriver to act as an electrical relay, which had burned out.

CECIL, with P2V's assisting, held the contact for 34 hours. LTJG Warren G. HAMMOND and LTJG Walter L. MC SWINEY relieved each other as officers of the deck during the period. The other stations did likewise, but for most it was "operation no sleep."

At 0553 in the morning on October 31st, the submarine surfaced and immediately broke a small Russian ensign. The CECIL attempted to communicate with the Russians by flag hoist using international signals and by flashing light using Commander ROZIER'S Russian phrase book. No acknowledgement was given to "Can I be of any assistance?" and "What Ship?"

The CECIL remained with the surfaced submarine for the next two days while it headed east.

Finally the submarine dove again. CECIL held contact for a while but never saw its Russian friend again.